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NSC BRIEFING

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I. Trend continues toward Cuba's becoming base for Communist activity in rest of Latin America.

A. Communists or pro-Communists from at least 15 of the other 19 Latin American countries were in Havana last week for "Week of Solidarity With Struggles of Latin American People."

1. Cuban speaker announced plans for a "great Latin American congress to create the apparatus to fight the common enemy." (No date set.)

a. Meetings stressed plight of Puerto Rico--"still under the bondage of the common enemy."

2. Manifesto published 26 March, last day of "Solidarity Week," vowed an "anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution in all Latin America."

3. Cuban labor leader announced that Cuban groups will leave on 1 May for other Latin American countries, "to give them help and to request aid for the Cuban revolution."

a. "Friends of Cuba" societies, virtual Communist fronts, now identified in 13 Latin American countries.

B. Veteran Communist labor leader Lombardo Toledano of Mexico, in Havana for "Solidarity Week," reportedly met there with other labor leaders to prepare constitution for new "independent" hemispheric labor movement.

1. An "independent" labor movement to replace discredited Communist CTAL was planned at clandestine meetings of Latin American Communists in Moscow early last year.

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2. Increased liaison among Latin American Communists now taking place in Cuba and the hemispheric "peace" conference planned for May or June in Havana were also parts of program developed at the Moscow meeting.

C. East German newspaperman says Cuba and GDR will exchange permanent trade missions in next two months, after which it will be easy for GDR to open "ambassadorial" office in Havana for Latin America similar to one it has in Egypt.

D. Meanwhile, Cuban TV commentator Luis Conte Aguero, whose anti-Communist broadcasts drew expressions of approval from thousands of Cubans, announced 26 March he forced to give up broadcasts because of charges that he was sowing division in the revolution. (He has since gone into asylum in Argentine embassy.)

1. Broadcasts had led to riots on 25 March between pro- and anti-Communist students.

2. Cuba's last independent TV channel likely to be seized by regime following 30 March freezing of bank accounts of owners of best known radio-TV network.

II. Efforts to whip up anti-US fervor continue, with emphasis on alleged threat of US-directed invasion.

A. Speeches by Fidel and Faul Castro on 27 March obviously intended to give impression invasion is virtual certainty.

1. Both insisted Cuba will not be "another Guatemala," and both referred to "volunteers" in other countries.

a. Raul said: "Brigades of volunteers to defend the Cuban revolution are forming in Venezuela and Bolivia because these people know that by defending the Cuban revolution they are defending the LA revolution. They know...Cuba is the first nation to start the second revolution."

1. The "first revolution" was for independence from Spain and Portugal; the "second" is against US "imperialism."

b. Other reports have mentioned groups in Venezuela and Chile volunteering to fight in Cuba against expected "imperialist aggression."

B. Foreign Minister Roa, in 24 March TV appearance, charged US has had designs on Cuba ever since Pres. Jefferson's 1805 statement that US would seize Cuba in the event of an Anglo-Spanish war.

C. Sugar workers' delegates meeting on 26 March accepted freeze in wages and said they would even accept wage reductions if necessitated by "the aggression which the imperialistic forces of international reaction are preparing."

III. In 27 March speech, Fidel Castro reiterated his complete rejection of all forms of private investments as help in solving Cuba's economic and social problems.

A. Moa Bay nickel mining and refining company (valued at $75 million a subsidiary of Freeport Sulphur Co.) plans to close down by 8 April if Cuban financial restrictions not eased.

IV. Meanwhile, defections of Castro officers continue.

A. Naval attaché in Mexico and two aides defected 25 March.

B. Capt. Chinea, commander of air base in Pinar del Rio, and two other officers defected and took asylum in Brazilian embassy on 23 March.

1. Before going to Brazilian embassy, Chinea told a US embassy officer that although discontent is spreading, especially among junior officers, there is still no cohesion because of the lack of a leader and rallying point.